The Untold

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The Untold

by Jana_Valker

Summary

What Satsuki can tell, she gives to the ink.
What she can't tell, she gives to the paper.
And the truth, she gives to the fire.

The Untold

Clamorem ad sidera mittunt.

Their shouts to the stars they send.

Statius , *Thebais*

Only when the house was silent, and the flames roared high in the fireplace, with their crackling voices as they drowned each other, only then Satsuki Kiryuuin would dare to sit down close to the fireplace, and, as she lay down by the flames, in the dark and empty room, with no sign of people, could she give form to the darkest of her secrets.

Then she would get out of her blouse, put her pants and sock on a nearby chair, and, grabbed a small wooden table and a steaming teapot, she'd start to speak aloud and write with her elegant calligraphy black signs on the white paper, that into the fire's light shone red.

“Today,” she began, “I saw you standing next to the grocery store, and I was amazed at the way you smiled, as a second thought, looking up to the sky. I watched the curve of your neck and the thin line of your lips, and I wished I knew what you were smiling for.”

Satsuki looked down at the paper; she watched the ink as it's surface turned from shiny dull. She said nothing. Every word she uttered in these moments was for her, every syllable, every breath.

After she was satisfied, she put the sheet aside and took another one; she plunged the brush once again into the ink and came back to write again.

“I love your hands. I love everything of you, but of your hands I am overly fond. You express yourself a lot with your hands, and this must be the way you keep them in your pockets for so long. I wonder what they must do inside them, what unseen gestures, what secrets they may share. I'd love to feel your hands against mine.”

She waited for the message, slightly longer this time, to dry. Then she put this aside too, and she started with another one.

“I remember a time when thinking of you was the only way to keep me sane. That worked. Now I am looking for ways to forget you. This isn't working. It's much easier to bind than untie. Why is it so? I feel cheated.”

Another pause, another message.

“For three days I tried to convince myself, yet again, that the relationship we enjoy was enough. That having you, as it is, is enough. It ended with a headache and a meditation two hours long. The more I feel like I can find ways to shut my mouth down, the more I feel the pressure build up, and my tongue starts to dance. To tell the truth. What a stupid thing is truth. The littlest spill overflows the strongest dams.”

That elicited a longer pause. Satsuki was used to have tea prepared and poured for her, but during these very particular times, she began to brew it herself; some times she got it right, some times she did not.

This time, she decided as the bitter taste bit her tongue, she got it right. Unlike other things, in this she was improving with time. She looked down at the teacup; for a moment, she wished she'd see the moon reflect upon its surface, but only a shadow in black and sepia tints of her own frame answered her.

The flames' heat licked at her bare skin; it was a pleasant sensation. She had often wondered if it would feel like this.

She put down her teacup.

“I am looking for you in the crowd; I am afraid of seeing you with somebody else. I am afraid of seeing you alone. You are so much farther now that you are at my hand's reach. I can see you whenever I want, but you don't see me.”

Five sheets were completed. Satsuki finished her tea. She always did these things in a set of six.

“The truth can never be told. It can only exist in the crevices, the corners where light cannot rest; it can only be felt by its absence. You might feel a ghost of this truth, from time to time. When you find me, looking at you with a smile, in the morning. When you hear my voice calling your name. When you know I felt your blood running though me. You might have evanescent memories of the truth, but you shouldn't latch onto it. There's no need. I shall retain everything with great care.”

The sixth sheet was completed. The ritual finished , Satsuki put down the brush and took all the six sheets in her hands, reading them one after the other, a few times, until she felt like she was satisfied with what she wrote this time.

Then, she stood up, took a step towards the fireplace, and she put the six sheets over the naked flame; the sheets wrinkled, curled, and with a sigh, erupted in bloom of whites and yellows and reds. Satsuki watched them burn, the ink disappear, the paper itself turn brittle, and being undone in thin ashes.

She sat down again, and waited for the fire to die.

When the last embers turned grey, she lighted up candles, and collected the ashes, with a small broom into a can; such work, which she would have in other times regarded as only fitting a servant, was now one of the dearest tasks in her life.

As she had collected up all the ash, she took the can, and went outside; it was dark, it was night, but the lights of the road below and the city around were more than enough to carve out of the black the simple shape of a row of small lemon trees. Young, yet ripe with fruits. There were six of them.

One by one, Satsuki bent down and poured ash over the lemon trees' roots, as she felt their rough texture being smoothed out by the soot; she did this with little light and great care, until she run out of ash.

Then, at last, she could rest.

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It didn't happen very often, but it did happen; Ryuuko would visit Satsuki's flat on her way back from school, or just to pay a visit to her sister. Satsuki was always the perfect host, and

she would always make sure to display a full plate of lemons in the middle of the table, when she poured tea in her cup and listened to Ryuuko's day.

And, from time to time, not very often, Ryuuko would pick up one of them, take a bite, smile, and comment that they were the best she'd ever tasted.

And always, Satsuki would smile back.

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